"To promote Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; to interpret the spiritual and religious values which inhere in the processes of agriculture and the relationships of rural life; to magnify and dignify the rural church; to provide a means of fellowship and cooperation among rural agencies: *Toward a Christian Rural Civilization.*"

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THE RURAL CLERGY*

by the Rev. L. Maxwell Brown

Many of you will find your vocation in the rural ministry, and devote a lifetime of service to God and His Church in this area. Others of you will depart for urban places, finding the work of a rural pastorate unattractive to your particular temperament. Gone is the day (I sincerely trust) when the rural parson is someone that is a clerical misfit, or one who has no initiative, training, or love for this work. The day has come when it is recognized that it takes a well trained and vigorous man to do the work of Christ's ministry in the country.

There are, of course, many characteristics of a priest that will be similar in either rural or urban settings. Most diocesan programs today give recognition to the importance of the country parson, by having this segment of our church's total ministry represented on important diocesan committees.

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*This is lecture number three of a series given by the author in February, 1958 at King's College University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, at the invitation of the Archbishop Hackenley Memorial Lectureship Foundation. It is reprinted here by permission, from the book containing the series, entitled, The Rural Church at Mid-Century.

The author has enjoyed a lengthy ministry in town and country areas as a priest in the Episcopal Church. He has appeared frequently as a rural conference leader and speaker as well as being the author of various articles and booklets on the subject.

At present he is an Associate Secretary of the Leadership Training Division of the Christian Education Department of the Episcopal Church.

You in Nova Scotia are extremely fortunate in having had, and in presently having, such fine leadership in the rural areas. Your diocesan leaders likewise see the work of the country parson in the true light of the fact that it really takes a great man to do a successful piece of work in the country.

RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR TO PEOPLE

Let us consider, then, this important man, the rural parson. First, what is his basic philosophy of relationship to the people in his parish? Is he going to spend his time ministering only to those who show an interest in him personally, or whose names are on the parish roll, or those who support the work of the church adequately? Or rather, will he see his ministry as being to everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus, whether Anglican or not; and furthermore, upon those who do not call, but must be led so to do? Is he concerned with every soul who lives halfway to the next Anglican altar in each direction from his own? Will he love people so much that he sees their faults and failures as a deep spiritual concern of his, and feels a sense of blame for not being able to interpret the love of God to them in such a way as to bring God's transforming presence into their lives?

Does he bring with him a superficial veneer of culture that does not fit into the rural setting: a setting which hates sham and pretense, or paraded differences; a setting which only asks of a man that he do his best in his work, honestly and sincerely? If this rural field into which he is going has a different cultural or racial background than his, is he willing to identify himself with the people, knowing that even so, it might be a while before he is accepted? Is he willing to laugh at his own mistakes, and willing to set the people at ease by showing them he wants forgiveness, that he wants to learn, that he does not want to force himself upon them, but does want to be one of them?

Often the reticence of rural people to accept the newcomer, and especially the new parson, is because he is there but a few months, using them for a stepping stone for what he considers an advance. Acceptance generally comes only when the priest can assure the people he is there for a long ministry, that he is not going to leave in a year or two. It has been shown many times that it takes at least five years to become a part of the community, although often an experienced man knows how to bridge this gap more quickly.

There are many things besides these that the rural clergyman must remember. He must have forgiveness, patience and a love for people as they are. He must be physically strong, for his work will call for much physical endurance. He will need to do work around the house and church buildings, and at times will want to help his parishioners with their tasks. He will need to be strong emotionally, for his emotions will be taxed, and he will frequently be present at occasions when a strong stomach, steel nerves, and a calm mind will be his best ministry. He must realize, too, that no man is indispensable, and that this work he does is the work of the Church, not the building up of his own reputation.

The rural priest must have a curiosity about who lives in every house in his cure; a curiosity as to where the residents go to church, and if they do not go, to make continued efforts to bring them into the saving fellowship of Christ's religion. If you think calling is tiresome, it is. But it is most necessary. You do not belong in the rural ministry if you have an aversion to calling. This means not only at the homes of people, but at places of business and of work, as well. Even on chance calls on the street, as elsewhere, you must never seem to be in a hurry, but always ready to take time for every person's desire to talk with you.

A former Bishop of mine once told me of a clergyman (now deceased) whom he wanted to transfer to another mission. This particular priest had been in charge of a mission for 21 years, and it seemed there had not been much progress there over the years. In going over the new work the Bishop outlined to the priest some possible activities and programs that might be considered in the new work, to help the place grow. Much to the Bishop's amazement, the priest said: "Why, you don't expect me to do all of those things, do you?" To make all those calls and to have all those meetings?" The Bishop, in wonder, asked him how many calls he was accustomed in making each week. The priest replied, "Well, I usually make three or four a week. Am I supposed to make more?" We can well understand why the priest's work for 21 years did not bear much fruit.

Calling, therefore, is an important part of our ministry that we must constantly stress. If the rural priest is afflicted with macadamitis, he will certainly fail. Macadamitis is a disease that prevents him from calling on anyone who does not live on a paved or macadamized road. Dirt and gravel roads are avoided since the car gets dirty on them, and the tires wear out more quickly.

Rev. L. Maxwell Brown

We must never give up trying to win people to Christ and His Church. I once moved to a parish and found an excellent list of up-to-date and properly cared for records from the former rector, something parenthtically, that is a canonical and moral responsibility some priests ignore. On the list I located a name. For the story, let's use the common name of Jones. The warden and other lay people did not know the family. In fact the address was obscure. But persistent tracking down took me, one day, to a farm house. The story, it seems, began some six years earlier when my predecessor was asked

to visit a man ill in the hospital, who seemed to have no church connection. From this contact, the son, a year or so later, asked the rector to perform a marriage service between him and a young lady from a distant city, whom he had met while in Army service. They went away right after the marriage service, since he was still in the armed forces. She accompanied him when she could, and returned to her parents when he was overseas.

When I found the couple, he had recently been discharged. They were living with the Jones boys' mother and building their own house down the road. I put them on our mailing list, and called upon them at times, but was never successful in getting them into the church. They had a child around a year old who had not been baptized, and I tried to get them to see their responsibilities from that angle. After four years of this, I was about ready to call it quits. However, I did send them an occasional newsletter. One pre-Lenten issue was sent to them, outlining in it the duties of a Christian. To my joy the couple came to my office that week, wanting to take instructions, and desiring the child be baptized. From that day on, they were always in church services, and became active supporters of the Church. It had taken around 10 years of pastoral contact, in one way or another, but no one could deny the results were worthwhile.

I feel all too often we give up on our people just because we have no response from them within a few months after an original contact. We can never tell when the Holy Ghost will be able to penetrate through to them, and I feel we must do all we can to help Him.

I feel it is of great importance to make calls on children, and not to ignore them in home calls. This, of course, must be done with a different technique, and often is done at the school room, or club meetings. Children revel in being noticed by their priest, so when you meet them in groups or even on the street, speak to them with attention, and their response to you, and incidentally, to the Church program, will be an amazing and thrilling experience. There is nothing that fills my ministry with more joy than when, after our 9:00 a.m. Family Eucharist, I go into the parish house for our fellowship breakfast, and am overwhelmed with the children making a point to come up and speak to me. I know that this is not just my reward, but the reward of thousands of other priests who see the children as persons not as young annoyances to life. Within the framework of our worship services we have built up our Family Service at nine o'clock as the most successful of all. I often remind parents at this service that children can make a joyful noise unto God just as we can, even if they do use different sounds, and at different times.

SCHEDULING AND PUBLICIZING THE DAILY ROUND

A rural parson's daily round is important. The time he retires, and the time he arises must be carefully considered. If we learn to plan our time properly, we will keep within the schedule of the community in which we live. If the people rise at sunup and retire at sundown, we must adjust our day likewise. We cannot sleep late in

the morning and work late into the night. These differences will only separate us from the people, and they will hesitate coming to us, for fear of interrupting our study, or embarrassing us in our sleep. The rural priest should be available to his people at hours they find most convenient. He should also at times get out early in the morning to see the farmer on his plow, or the fisherman before he casts off for the banks. Otherwise, he many never see them.

There is a feeling in the States that the clergyman is entitled to one day off a week. In the rural areas it is hard to have a set pattern for this. Generally, I have found, it has been impossible even to take off one full day at a time, so I plan to scatter my recreational periods through the week. In this way I have time for my family, and recreation with some of my parishioners, without violating an honest work schedule.

There are numerous parishioners who delight in having me join them in recreational pursuits. I'll admit that it is a temptation sometimes that I have to resist when the pressure gets too great. But at least once a week I try to satisfy these invitations and in fishing or hunting, or in other ways, I get to know my men in a very intimate way. To arise long before dawn, and get out at the duck blind, setting out decoys in cold and rough weather, sitting together in anticipation of the birds flying over, and enjoying the good shooting, or laughing over the misses, is a fine way not only to relax, but to get to know each other well, and to talk over problems and personal matters. It is serving a dual purpose, and is certainly a part of our rural ministry.

The rural priest's study hours and office hours are important. We must be careful, however, to keep proper balance between study, office time, and the rest of our work. One rural priest I know has not had too successful a ministry, because he spends the best hours of the day cloistered away in his study, not even answering the phone.

Our daily schedule must be arranged not at our convenience, but at the convenience of our people. Some rural priests have stated office hours. These are distinguished from study time. Office time is when we do the administrative details, as well as expecting people to come in with problems, and with details of parish activities. The best way I know to let your people be aware of these hours, is to list them regularly in the Sunday bulletin, the parish paper, and on the bulletin board. Then be sure you are there, unless called away by emergencies. The phone should be in the office, not in the study. I have found that people appreciate and respond to this scheduling of time.

The same type of announcements are helpful if your charge is some distance from the hospitals serving your area. A regular schedule of hospital calling must be publicized, so that your people will know what hospital you will visit and when to be seen and inform you who is there. Naturally, emergencies are handled at once, but regular visitations should be by schedule. If your hospital is a local one, this will change the picture.

One of the best ways I have found to keep a rapport between myself and my parishioners is to print a monthly or quarterly diary. This is summarized, and eliminates personal references, but it lets people know what I do with my time. It can be written up in a lively fashion that stimulates reading. Incidentally, this is the best cure I know for the parishioner who thinks all a priest does is to hold Sunday services, and prepare a sermon.

I have mentioned study and office, and the desirability of keeping them separate. We might be asked how this can be done in a small, and poor rural parish. I think it can be solved. The study, if it can be no place else, can be in the rectory, although I prefer mine when possible, at the church or parish house. But people do not like to come to an office in a rectory to see their priest. It interferes, they think, with the rectory family's schedule. They often feel embarrassed in that their problem is personal, and they do not want others see them go into the rectory for an interview with the priest. Often, too, they feel they must dress up in their best clothes, as if on a social call.

I prefer having my office, for these reasons, at some other location. It is not generally too difficult to find some unused space downtown, over some store, or basement. (Or even as Canon Puxley suggested after the lectures, in the corner of a lobster shed) It should be at the center of the busiest part of the parish life. You will be surprised at the increased number of visitors you will have, and the contacts you will make with non-Anglicans who will come to you for help. These contacts frequently are the beginnings that lead people into the church family. When a priest has more than one mission, it is imperative that he have office hourse regularly in each of his charges.

Whatever he does, the rural priest must be available to all people at all times, and must make it possible for the people to know that he is available, by being around them at every event, on every occasion, even to walking down the streets of the village at certain hours of every day. The Roman Catholics, in a book I commend to you, Manifesto of Rural Life call the rural pastor "A first-line messenger of God exercising a ministry as simple and apostolic as that of the early Church."* How true this is for a rural pastor who takes his work seriously.

<u>The rural clergyman must acquire the skill to develop lay leadership</u>. It is so easy in a rural mission, where leadership may not be plentiful, for the priest to spend his time doing work that lay people could do, simply because he finds it takes too much energy to get the lay people to do it. Yet, I recall Bishop Sanford, of San Joaquin, saying that he would rather take twice as long to find and train someone to do a church job than to do the work himself, or to hire it done. It takes imagination and perseverance,

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* Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1944, P. 35.

but the rural priest must learn to use lay people in as many tasks as possible. The more people there are doing work for the Church, the healthier will be the parish. Naturally, I recognize that behind all progress of the Church is real heart devotion to the cause of Christ. But laymen, imbued with a personal unwillingness to let the Church down will emit the spirit that accomplishes wonderful results that cannot be measured in dollars and cents, but rather in a great forward advance for Christ.

Yes, a rural pastor must be a business manager, but one that draws upon, trains, and bears patiently with lay helpers. St. Paul's statement about long-suffering is pertinent, yet recall it is also a Christian virtue.

What about such things as records, and following up leads, and keeping in touch with those who move away from the parish to another place? It is our responsibility to keep in touch with them, and to get them transferred to their new parish home. I want to quote from a letter I received last November that illustrates this. It is from the rector of a church in North Carolina, in a city to which one of my families moved. I had written the rector of their move, and their address. When he called he found that they had not moved to the intended address. He wrote me asking help. We finally located the family. True, they should have made themselves known to him, but people do not always follow an expected pattern when they move. His letter says, in part: "I appreciate more than I can say your perseverance in trying to help me locate this family. It is very rare, as I am sure you know, for us to receive any notification from the former rector of families moving into a new area, and to have you follow-up in the way you did was a very fine thing." I quote this not for praise, but for the serious point he brings out in his letter regarding the carelessness of so many of our clergy and their obvious lack of concern for souls when it comes to people moving out of their parish into another one.

I commend to you the various studies recently made concerning the role of the clergyman in society today. One, under the auspices of Union Theological Seminary in New York, deals with what the rural pastor <u>feels</u> are his roles and what the average layman <u>thinks</u> are his roles. The study reveals how time and pressure brings about a role unlike either of the two. Dr. Blizzard, the director of the study, handles some of his reports in a homiletical style, and some from a strictly sociological point of view. His reports present the rural minister as mainly dealing with problems brought about by changes in the community. He calls the rural minister, one who must fulfil the prophetic role not just in the limited sense we sometimes use the word meaning preacher, but rather the prophetic social critic, who through preaching, teaching, as priest, organizer, and administrator, brings meaning and stability to the changing environment of the parishioners. These few ideas lifted from his reports indicate, to me, the personal relationship a rural minister has with his people, and with everyone in the community. Hence, as a leader, his is a

great responsibility to know human nature, something of psychology, self-discipline, and all the other characteristics pertaining to leadership.

We must realize that for most people in the community, the Church represents an ideological type of concern. The rural minister's greatest task is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into a real relationship with those to whom he ministers. The rural minister occupies a certain status within the community that is automatically his by the position he holds. There may at times, however, be a question in the minds of people just what he is supposed to be doing. As Martin Thornton said in his book, Rural Synthesis,* "The farm worker regards the Church as an essential part of the village, and he respects the rector as an indispensable member of the community, but I think, on the whole, that he would like to be just a little clearer as to exactly why. He cannot really believe that using traditional and time-honored language to an awkward horse has anything very vital to do with it. In any case, the village has a policeman to keep order, it has a doctor to tend the sick and a schoolmaster to teach." Thornton goes on to point out there is the town leader in social functions, another one who runs the cricket team. Then he concludes: "Of course, the parson is a very nice man, and there has always been a parson, and it's a very good thing, but just a little vague--if only he had some quite definite and distinct job!"

I think that Thornton may be enjoying a bit of satire at the expense of the rural parson, but unfortunately what he says comes too close to the truth when we realize how infrequently we really communicate our message to the people.

PREACHING--A RELATIONSHIP, NOT JUST AN ART

Too many sermons, as Canon Wedel, of the College of Preachers says, just manicure morals, This is certainly not what Jesus did. Jesus gave people good news as it spoke to their life experiences. "Those who have ears, let him hear" was not spoken to frighten people into paying attention. Rather it was an acknowledgment on his part that only those would hear his words who knew from life's experiences what he was talking about. The Pharisees and Sadducees could not understand Jesus because they thought people learned about God's concern for them by the use of materials and liturgies. Jesus knew that these things were but to be outward symbols of the face-to-face experiences we all have, and that materials and liturgies must build upon and help interpet these experiences.

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*Skeffington and Son, Ltd., London, P. 122.

Jesus, first of all, recognized people's needs and gave to them the resources of faith and heritage so that these threw light on their need, giving them a deepening insight into life, a recognized concern of God, a faith by which to live. He knew that there were two kinds of needs. First the need to understand experiences. Why? How? The Pharisees said to the crippled man by the pool of Siloam: obey the law and you will be saved. Jesus, on the other hand saw his need, saw the experience of this man who wondered how he could get to the pool. Jesus satisfied his need. Even if Jesus had not healed him, the man would have found strength in Jesus, One who understood his need and would share with him an understanding in that he knew what suffering and frustration was. Jesus also knew the second kind of need: that of belonging. Not only belonging in the sense of being accepted by others, but also the belonging to the great heritage of the Church that spoke to the people. He cured the 10 lepers, and sent them to the priests. This was not only in accord with health rules that made the priest the public health officer, stating whether the person was cured or not. It was in the Temple that the men would find the rich sense of belonging, would find in the past that God did care for lepers, and all the scripture and doctrines of the past would uphold them in their renewed relationship with the people of God in the Temple.

Perhaps I can illustrate this with the story of the man whose wife died at an early age, leaving three small children. The man, prominent in public life, said that he did not want to attend church where he was known, because people gushed over him. Rather he found strength, comfort, an answer to his need by going to God in a parish church where he was not known well.. There he could say the creed with others who believed, even though his own belief was shaky. There he could say the prayers he was familiar with, even though he almost did not know what he was saying. The heritage of the Church filled his need. It was not the actions, or customs, or even the words. It was strength in knowing that here was stability that strengthened. Here was an answer to his need of wanting to belong. Only then did he understand others that they were not gushing over him, but rather trying to communicate something to him.

When John the Baptist sent to Jesus a question as to whether He was the Messiah, what did Jesus say? He told the

messengers: "look about you." Here are people who have a need. What have I done about it? I have fulfilled their need, which has given them a new insight deepening their faith by which to live.

What I am trying to say is that our sermons must be related to life experiences of our people. They must show that the preacher sees their needs, their life situations, their area of belonging. To this he must give them the resources of the Christian faith, throw light upon their need, which will bring about a deepening insight in Christian living, and produce a Faith by which to live. A preacher cannot do this unless he is truly involved within the lives of his people. He cannot be involved unless he speaks their language, and lives with them in such a way that says, unless God wills otherwise, I am going to live here with you for the rest of my life.

Thus the rural preacher does not take a Bible text and give an expository sermon. He takes his"text" from some event that happened in the community, perhaps for the sake of charity and understanding, it is couched in an illustration that changes setting and personalities, but the relationship can be felt, in an emphatic manner by the hearers. He will draw upon the Bible for illustrations, for helping his congregation see themselves in these Bible characters, for showing that Jesus knew their needs, and that God is concerned about them. The Prayer Book, Hymnal, Liturgy, and the rest of the heritage will be valuable references, but mainly the sermon will throw light on the need, giving Faith and trust and an understanding that the Act of God in Jesus Christ in redeeming man has meaning to these life needs.

Sermons ought never to be read. People in smaller places feel a lack of contact and sincerity in a read sermon. I recall the priest who read his sermon, punctuating it with frequent comments: "I want you to remember this." After the service, the wise old warden said: "Sir, how do you expect us to remember your sermon when you have to read it to us yourself?"

The worship service designed by the priest should have a theme in hymns, lessons, and sermon. It also helps our people understand the theme and teaching of the various parts of the service when introduced with well-chosen comments.

THE MISSIONARY OUTREACH

Because I firmly believe it, I must say a few words about the obligations of the priest in a village or town to do missionary work outside his own village and its trading area. Each diocese has its own canons concerning new missions and preaching stations. Yet these often can be stumbling blocks or excuses for the lack of expanding our work.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, we read where Jesus said to Peter when he came searching for him in a lonely place: "Let us go to the neighboring country towns, so that I may preach to them also. That is why I came out here." And Mark tells us that Jesus "went around among the villages teaching."

That is our responsibility, too. If we see a village within travel distance from us that is not receiving an adequate Christian ministry, then it is our bounden duty to go over there and bring the tender, healing, saving Gospel of Jesus to them. Certainly it means more work for us! Certainly, there will be people in our home parish who will question our right to share this ministry with others who do not financially support it. The best way I know to answer these people is to get them involved in this missionary outreach. The Holy Spirit has a particular effective way of working on these people when they get so involved.

I find great joy and reward in this kind of missionary outreach. I try to be honest with my home parish in the amount of time given to this new work, and yet even with so much as only a service every other week, God blesses the endeavor. Wherever I have been stationed, I have always found some village or town within driving distance that would respond to a ministry. This has taken various forms. Sometimes it has been a combination Church and Sunday school on a completely community basis. Sometimes it has been but a Sunday School. Quite frequently I have located a few families of Episcopalians and held cottage meetings which have been the start of a new mission. To me, my ministry is not complete unless I can find and start new outposts for God and the Church in some area where it is needed.

Coupled with this is the seeking out and bringing into a meaningful fellowship within the presently organized parish set-up those families and individuals who have drifted away from active participation and worship. It is amazing how many people there are in this category.

As we look about the village or the town, we may find but few of these inactive communicants. But if we will take as our territory the distance halfway between our altar and the next Episcopal altar and see that area as our parish, and convince our vestry and parishoners that the cross that shines high on the steeple is the beacon for those people in the country and villages about us, to guide their lives again to Christ, then we will find a tremendous number of these former inactive Anglicans. In my own experience in my present parish, as well as in former parishes, within the first year of my ministry I usually have been able to locate 15 to 25 Episcopalian families outside of the town limits where the parish church was located. The following year others would be located, so that the map on my office wall would be filled with marks of countryside families who were either communicants or had had previous connections with the Episcopal Church and welcomed a chance to renew it. Jesus said, "Seek and ye shall find."

There are many proven methods by which these rural families can be served. We are all aware of the important function that the Church School by Mail plays in most of our parishes. The teaching missions and the summer Vacation Church Schools held in areas where we have no church building are also methods of reaching out. A method that I like particularly well and which has the value of expanding parish activities without too much investment of money, but which bears more fruit in relation to the time put into the endeavor is what I have called an Episcopal Fellowship. By this I mean the gathering together of Episcopal families and their friends who live in certain villages or "four corners," for Evening Prayer, instruction and fellowship. There is nothing new to this method, the old cottage meetings were based on the same principles. However, many of the cottage meetings were the forerunner of the establishment of a small mission that lived for a while and then died because the next minister had no time or inclination to carry on the small mission.

The value of the Episcopal Fellowship is that there is a considerable effort made to draw these people who meet once a month for a neighborhood fellowship meeting into the activities of the parish church in the parish

building. These people are encouraged to come to the parish church for their sacraments, to attend the guild meetings, special services, the parish family night suppers. Once this pattern is established, we need not fear that these people will be lost if a succeeding minister fails to continue the Episcopal Fellowship meetings.

Of course, if there is considerable distance between the towns there is a further expansion of this plan whereby a small building is erected or purchased in these outstations and operated as a unit parish from the mother church. Weekday and Sunday School activities can be held in a unit parish house and perhaps even frequent services. But these people know they are a part of the large parish, they know who their rector is, they are part of the parish activities, they are not burdened with the support of the mission program or upkeep without help from the mother church. A member of this outstation unit parish house group can be elected on the vestry of the parish church, and instead of having a string of weak missions, we have a large parish with a series of operating unit-parish houses, the program for which can be very adequately conducted by trained laymen.

THE FACETS OF A RURAL CLERGYMAN'S LIFE

This, then, is the rural pastor: how he might see himself and his work; how his people might see him. It does us good to look carefully at all sides of this man and his ministry. A revealing study was recently made of 337 rural clergy in Missouri from all denominations. This study identified the job descriptions of these men as having eight aspects.

1. He was a symbol of religious ideals to the community.

2. He was a prophet.

3. He was a priest.

4. He was a student.

5. He was a pastor.

6. He was an administrator.

7. He was a supervisor.

8. He was the church's representative in society.*

We referred earlier to Dr. Blizzard's study. The value of both his and this Missouri one is that they help us get an objective picture of what we really are. True, it is a composite picture, but a valid one by which we can really test our image of self and our position. The Missouri study, for instance, gave a time description of a typical rural clergyman's week, based upon reports from these 337 ministers. The results of this time study were amazing to me.

The average for all types (sect, church, part-time and full-time clergy) showed that he spent 36.7 hours a week in his work. This was broken down thusly:

Preparation of sermons and speeches.. 7.4 hours a week

Bible reading..... 6.4 hours a week

General reading..... 5.8 hours a week

Conferences and confessionals..... 1.9 hours a week

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*"Implications of the Missouri Rural Church Study for the Town and Country Church Movement," Lawrence N. Hepple, pp. 41-51, in New Horizons for Town and Country Churches. Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches, New York, 1956.

Visitations..... 10.7 hours a week

Sunday Schedule of services.... 3.3 hours a week

Weekly schedule of services.... 1.2 hours a week

The average for a full-time church type clergyman, which would include the Episcopal priest, gave the weekly hour per week as 46.3.

Although I recognize that I am not fully aware of all the questions asked, or the matter of tabulations, yet these figures are none-the-less frightening to me. For figuring it in my arithmetic, using a 16 hour waking day (and I actually think few of us have an 8-hour sleeping day) that 7 days times a 16 hour day gives 112 hours. Subtract the 46 hours given above, and it leaves 66 hours. Eliminate 3 hours a day for eating meals, and we have 45 hours remaining. Remove two hours daily for family time and recreation, and we have left 31 hours. I want plainly to ask: What do we do with those 31 hours left each week?" This is around two-thirds of the actual average working time the full-time church type clergy reported.

I feel this challenges us into re-examining our daily work schedule. I am fully aware of the fact that a clergyman's time is difficult to plan, for we cannot deal with personal consultations by quick diagnosis, nor solve problems with prescriptions of pills. Our day is constantly rearranged by manifold interruptions of a valid nature. But I believe it would assist us all in better planning the Lord's work if we made an accurate time-study of our day for a period of a month, and scrutinize it for self-improvement.

I can also perceive that such a study would be an excellent answer to the uninformed laity who believe a clergyman does little except conduct Sunday services!

As we have seen, it is truly a great man who is a successful rural priest. He must have many skills of mind, soul, and body. Yet the fruit of his labor is likewise great; and the harvest is ripe for our Lord! All that is needed are more consecrated rural clergymen.

A fitting summary of this chapter is found, I believe, in words penned by a woman who has spent many years serving Jesus Christ in rural areas, when she wrote: "It takes a minister who has been ably trained; who has a heart of love and whose soul is big enough to let men know it; it takes a minister who is willing to know his people and the opinions and facts that the neighbors know about his people and still see them as a part of the church. It takes big living for the pastor of these folk. There is no room in the rural ministry for the small minister who is self-centered, who is easily hurt, who has to have things going steadily forward, who needs to be blown up like a circus balloon in order to feel successful, who revels in large numbers. It takes a heap of daily Christian living to be a rural pastor. This living is not noticed in the pulpit, but it is observed keenly in the pastor's calling, his attitude on Main Street, in his vegetable garden, in his appreciation of the countryside, in his greeting of folk on Monday through Saturday--this daily living of the rural pastor is seen by all."*

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*Jeanie K. Sherman: "Ministering in Sparsely Settled Areas, p. 57, New Horizons op. cit.

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